"LITERATURE" as FIRST AID to the "WHITE LIGHT"

A New, "Tropical Idyl" Type of Romance Springs From Pen of Mrs. Jeanie Eaton, Sensational Murder Trial Heroine.

DAYS and days the storm had raged round the bleak, rock-bound coast. It tossed the seaweed into wild festoons of desolate dampness and the waves ran every one larger than its predecessor. How large the predecessor measured nobody knew. Nobody was around with a tape-line when it came over the bar.

Anyway a fair young thing who smiled ingenuously above her half-yard of waistcloth and lotus-wreaths was skipping up and down the rocks, and wishing her skin were white instead of stale lemon color when the hero came riding in on a twenty-foot tidal wave. From the moment he gazed into her eyes like chocolate gumdrops he knew his fate. So he gave her a book (though God knows where he got it, seeing that he was washed onto the rocks with no dunnage but his clothes), and let her drag him under her thatched paternal roof.

"Sevar, Sevar!" he called her instantly, though nobody'd introduced him. And then followed a week of happiness like a dream. He decided he would marry her; his family be hanged. But just as he began to propose a cannon boomed and he saw a U. S. warship just a mile off shore. Ah, 'twas the call of destiny. He left her, weeping. He watched her tears through a field glass as he steamed away on the warship.

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This, gentle reader, is a sample of a new type of literature—"A Tropical Idyl" type. It's from the pen of Mrs. Jeanie Eaton. Mrs. Eaton will be remembered as principal figure in the Eaton murder trial of two years ago—a defendant, to be exact, she having been indicted on six counts and charged with administering white arsenic to her husband, Rear Admiral Joseph Giles Eaton, U. S. N., retired. After a sensational trial in which her youngest daughter, Dorothy Ainsworth Eaton, stepdaughter of the admiral, materially assisted the prosecution by her testimony, the accused was acquitted, and retired to the Eaton farm at Assinippi, near Rockland, Mass., first remarrying her former husband, D. Henry Ainsworth. She dropped from sight for a while, though during the trial of Mrs. Florence Carman, charged with murder at Mineola, L. I., she broke forth in a long, doleful wail against the government's manner of handling murder cases, especially against women.

Now she is going to write. Her first, entitled, "The Love of a Maid and the Love of a Man," is introduced by a sanguine eastern editor, who candidly explains that while the story may be criticized for lack of literary finish, it is possessed of a striking underlying theme and a naturally picturesque quality of wording; also, says he, it expresses perfectly Mrs. Eaton's love of romance.

"The Love of a Maid and the Love of a Man" starts out, as has been indicated, with a storm in the tropics. Desolate dampness drips all around; abandoned grace, dark and dead wastes, and mad, whirling waters abound. How there's light enough to see in detail the green centered blue of each wave isn't made very clear. But one takes that on faith; the waves are probably that color when they're seen.

Appears Sevar, daughter of the water, laughing at the stranger, whose hand she holds tight and firm. "Tight and firm," by the way, may or may not be an example of said picturesque wording.

"Fear not," says her sweet, musical voice, "I will guide you safely. This way" and she leads him along the wild, dangerous cliff. Her eyes dance in mirth at the American's evident fright at the mighty waves. It is his first witness of the full fury of a tropical storm.

Sevar is young and lovely. Also emphatically decollete, top and bottom. Her beautiful sylph-like body springs with the grace of a fawn from rock to rock.

"And the young civil engineer, following close behind, wonders what manner of woman or girl this can be who so modestly, even in her slight attire, leads him frankly by the hand out of the vast and whirling waters which threaten every instant to ingulf them."

Sevar conducts him to her home, where soft, heavy perfume steeps the dew-laden air. Baskets and silks, couches and fire-arms are more or less jumbled together.

"Tiny and large tables of greatest rarity adorned this great room, of highly polished palm with wondrous design and skill," explains Mrs. Eston.

"Wilson forgot the storm, forgot that he had been caught in a tidal wave twenty feet in height, a solid wall of water, that had caught him and all his provisions in its merciless clutch. All this horror he forgot, for here was fire and warmth and this dear little tropical flower innocent as a babe. And they were alone in this beautiful dream room."

Sevar brought him food. The author enthuses over the coffee which she says was "a clear, golden amber, with perfume that outrivals roses, flecked with great clots of goat's milk, with tiny lumps of crystal sugar which one hammers from a great lump of native sugar. So sparkling and snowy it is that one longs to bite it to see if it be real."

Wilson sleeps and when he awakens Sevar is in the room. He at once falls in love with the girl who has been carelessly left alone on the island. Fact is that she is beginning to talk to him the first day about a possible rival back in the states.

"The childish eyes gaze into Wilson's with such dumb devotion that he feels that odd, queer lump rise in his throat and his heart leaps. Then he says to himself he is a beast and thinks with a nervous shock of what his mother and sisters would say of this island girl, be she ever so lovely."

Wilson decides he will marry her. But Sevar comes to his rescue and says it can't be.

"And the dark, pleading eyes of Sevar hold him as he sees that the brains of the island girl are awake. And she loves him too well to let him ruin himself no matter how much she should suffer.

"The tender eyes plead with him. 'It is good for you; it must be so; you must go back to the white girl.'

"But he loves her and he will make her—but just then comes the boom, boom of a cannon. One of Uncle Sam's navy has arrived off the coast unnoticed. The great battleship has sailed within a mile of where they are sitting, and Wilson gasps as he sees the Stars and Stripes wave far over her deck.

"He pulls himself together. Sevar is right. Out here, on the island, life is one thing; back in the States it is another. And yet he loves her; she is so lovely."

Sevar takes him to the ship, and half an hour later, Wilson feeling pale and frayed is on his way to the States.

"He gazes through field glasses at the fast-disappearing shore and sees a lovely girl, with bare arms and white lotus flowers drop her paddle into the bottom of her canoe and bow her head in bitterest grief while great tears fall unheeded on a book he has given her. He sees her hold the book up to her lips firmly and then drop it overboard and stand with clasped hands until the tiny volume sinks out of sight. He sees her take his gifts, one by one, from around the chain on her neck and drop them in the water, kissing each one as she throws it far from her.

"Wilson is sick at heart. What a white-souled woman she was! How strong and true and tender! What a wonderful woman she would have been had she been educated and white.

"Then he laughs as he thinks of his ten days with this beautiful Sevar—a mad, mirthless laugh full of bitterness. He hates life and asks himself what it is that plans for men and women this sacred thing we call love."

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Why, exactly, do women who once have squirmed under the white light of publicity attempt to return to that light by way of the art route? Is it because the bizarre gets into their veins and they can't be contented in the quiet of home?

Anyhow it almost never fails that a sensational murder trial will produce an aspiring vaudeville headliner, sculptor, artist or writer. The name and fame of the vaudeville headliner, sculptor or artist appear on front pages, with awed or charitable comment by the critics. The writer receives the same consideration in addition to having her output printed, with introductory notes by the editor. And the general public, mindful of what has gone before, reads avidly and threshes over the relation of crime to art.

Is there a cause and effect between crime and art? Is it perhaps possible that the stress of a murder trial may produce impressions too deep for ordinary expression, and so cause an attempt at interpretation?

Or is it only woman's creative instinct gone wrong after contact with crime?

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The developments in the Eaton case, following quickly one after another, revealed a family story of such weird and yet such intensely human elements that the narrative, as it flashed from day to day, was like a series of moving pictures, each film more astonishing than the last.

The admiral died on March 8, 1913; on March 11 it became known that the authorities were investigating his death; on March 12 Mrs. Eaton and her youngest daughter conveyed the body to Oaklawn cemetery, Dracut, for burial. There were no services and no naval escort. On March 13 authorities visited the Assinippi home and subjected the members of the family to a severe grilling; March 15 a secret inquest was begun at Hingham courthouse; March 16 a watch was placed on the Eaton home; March 19 the state police began a search for poison sales at drug stores; March 20 officials took Mrs. Eaton to Hingham presumably as an inquest witness and there formally placed her under arrest. Mrs. Eaton was indicted on six counts, charged with poisoning her husband. October 30 her long and intensely interesting trial ended.

Striking eccentricities of character were sketched round the accused by the testimony. She was shown as a woman of marvelous resources and poise, and as a creature of ungovernable temper and unreasonable jealousy. Formerly she had been a school teacher, it was said. Yet letters that were written by her rambled meaningless, repeating words and phrases and trailing off in vague endings.

Dorothy testified that her mother had been jealous of her husband "who was the best of daddies and whom she loved dearly." June Ainsworth Keyes, the older daughter, declared that the admiral was insane, addicted to drugs and drink, and that her mother had been afraid of him.

Perhaps no more dramatic scene was ever enacted than the arrest of Mrs. Eaton. The simplicity and quiet, her intense stillness, masking what must have been a crisis in her life's emotions, surrounded it and set it apart.

The deputy sheriff, reading the warrant, touched her shoulder gently, to signify that she was his prisoner. She stiffened under the shock of that touch, then shuddered a little.

"Murder!" she whispered. Afterward she was perfectly calm. She was a striking figure as she waited in prison. Her high coloring made up, somewhat, for evident weakness of features, and she wrote continually, turning out letters, sketches and stories.

"Few can appreciate the terrible situation in the Carman murder case as can I who but recently was acquitted from a charge as grave as that lodged against Mrs. Carman," she wrote, in sympathy with Mrs. Carman.

"The nameless terror that takes possession of a sensitive woman, * * * the weary months of suspense, the consciousness of overwhelming injustice, the public scorn and the separation from one's friends and family—have I not endured them all? And for what? That a cruel and heartless state, grown callous in the exercise of the barbarous spirit of revenge, shall take toll from someone, no matter whom, for the death of one of its members.

"It is little short of crime itself for the so-called beneficent state to place one of its members in prison without absolute proof of his guilt.

"After one has been acquitted of such a charge people whom they have never seen in their lives shrink from them and point them out as the person who killed so-and-so. Everywhere one must go there is the gaping, curious throng ready to hold her up to nameless insult and ridicule. And all this even after a woman has been declared innocent. * * * To be a leper is not nearly so bad as to live on under such a stigma. * * *

"I earnestly entreat the people of these broad United States to rise to their fine sense of honor and principle, and, as a nation, pass a law so that no official can deprive a person of his liberty until he is proven guilty. * * *

"As things are now, the courts and district attorneys are carried away in their lust to win either by hook or crook so that they entirely forget the sensitive soul of the perhaps innocent prisoner whom they are pilloring in the dock.

"If a person must undergo the stigma and injustice of incarceration only to be proven innocent, then I think the state should pay such victims of judicious malpractice the sum of $5 a day for each and every day they are held in jail, besides defraying all the expense of defending the prosecution by the state.

"I can but add that jails are kindergartens to the madhouse. For a high-strung innocent woman they are doubly so. Yet, after all, life can never be quite the same for Mrs. Carman even if she is cleared of guilt in the eyes of the law. Her misfortune will follow her wherever she goes. When will the United States become civilized enough to rise above this relic of barbarism?"

Pocket Theater Is Invention of Edison, Jr.

THE Pocket Theater—that's the newest and the littlest of all new and little theaters.

The son of America's greatest inventor is the inventor of it. Charles Edison brought it into being to get good music, good plays, good prose and good poetry before the people who have comparatively little chance to hear any of these things.

When the thing gets working properly Edison intends to give complete performances of comic and grand opera on its stage. Phonographs will play the music and little puppets will do the acting.

Guido Bruno, writer and publisher of quaint Greenwich village, was the one who interested Edison in the plan. One of Bruno's pet ideas is the spreading of good pictures among the common people by having prints of the best works hung in grocery stores, barber shops, cigar shops, shoe shining stands and other places of the sort where the proletariat gather and where their eyes usually meet only cheap and worthless reproductions of pictures of no value.

"It sounds well," was Mr. Edison's comment. "But why limit it to pictures? Here in Greenwich village, for instance, you have a good many painters and sculptors, writers and designers, but musicians are scarce. New York has plenty of good art every place, but music is scarce."

There are three features to the plan as it has been worked out—park concerts, moving pictures and studio recitals. The first two are still matters of the future. Edison and Bruno hope to obtain permission to give phonograph concerts from the Washington Square pavilion on Sunday afternoons and evenings. They think that with the large Italian population of the district south of the Square, who have feeling for music and little opportunity to hear the best, they should be able to give recitals of good works without losing any of the popular interest, the winning and holding of which is the chief object of the plan.

Later on Edison hopes to fit up a small moving picture theater in Fifth ave. and give photoplays for the multitude—anybody who wants to come in.

"The popular appeal of this sort of things," says Edison, "will naturally be much greater than that of the studio recitals. The principal purpose of these at present is simply to get together men and women who want to hear the best music and who have little chance to do so around this neighborhood at this time. I expect to have the best machines, the best records, and the best selections. While the affairs are nominally by invitation only, the general idea is similar to that of the exhibits of paintings which are held in private galleries in this neighborhood; if anybody wants to attend, there will be no difficulties in the way. But naturally the recitals in the studio will appeal in the main only to more cultivated tastes."

The first of these studio recitals was held with Charles Keeler, the poet, as the principal attraction.

Mr. Keeler is one of the onomatopoetic poets whose words sound sweetly regardless of their meaning, and his declamations were accompanied by soft music on the phonograph. Other similar bards followed.

This newest of the toy theaters will have an auditorium seating about 250, and a stage, most of which is contained within the big bay window at the back of the first floor of a house. The first play to be staged, according to Guido Bruno, who is making the arrangements for Edison, is to be an adaptation of Johann Strauss' "Die Fledermaus." The parts will be taken by actors and actresses most of them drawn from the villages.

The actors will speak and sing, but the place of the orchestra will be taken by four big phonographs, set off behind the screens at the rear of the stage, and so synchronized that as one runs down another will take up the air without interruption. The records will include a number of selections from "Die Fledermaus" as played by the New York Symphony Orchestra.

The stage is going to be fitted up with severe simplicity, and will in the main be as bare as that of a Greek theater. It will be shut off by a pair of curtains in black and white, which Clara Tice is now designing, and everything about it is to be of peculiarly American character. Every piece of furniture which is to be used in any of the productions will be built by artists in Greenwich village, who will aim, according to the promoters, to make it something more than a piece of furniture—something to express the spirit of the age. The same will be true of the costumes, which will be idealizations of the actual garments worn in the periods of the various plays.

There will be no scenery, but the stage will be floored with a rag carpet woven by convicts in the Minnesota state prison and colored by a secret method which, it is said, is unknown outside the prison walls, and the hangings are of cloth woven near Bowling Green, Ky., by a colony of negroes whose ancestors were freed in 1814 and handed down their primitive crafts to the succeeding generations.

If the plans work out successfully Edison's studio will in time be a musical center of Greenwich village, and almost the only one, to complement the many fireside circles where plays and pictures and poems are the burden of the conversation.

CARRY CHARMS TO WARD OFF BULLETS

THE soldiers of the kaiser are very superstitious, from the men in the ranks clear up to the crown prince. Wilhelm's eldest son carries a horseshoe with him on all his auto trips, and the crown prince spends most of the day in his auto. The horseshoe is attached to one of the doors of the car and when being photographed in his auto, the Prince always insists on the photographer "taking" the side of the car with the horseshoe.

The soldiers of Wuerttemberg pin their faith upon a little bag containing the dry pollen of flowers, which, they believe, has the power of warding off the bullets.

The Saxons sew into the lining of their waistcoats the wings of a bat, and think themselves to be invincible.

The Bavarians hold on tenaciously to a still more bizarre custom. Before going into battle each soldier finds a birch tree, cuts his skin, and lets a few drops of blood fall upon the tree. This ceremony, they assert, assures recovery, no matter what the nature of the wound, when the leaves begin to grow again.